

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12
TRSE-00 IO-13 /091 W
-----032463 151009Z /14

R 141258Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO USMISSION USNATO
SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

S E C R E T OSLO 1844

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: NATO, OVIP, NO, SP
SUBJ: SECDEF VISIT: NORWEGIAN VIEWS ON SPAIN IN NATO

1. SUMMARY: DURING HIS APRIL 13 CONVERSATION WITH SECDEF
BROWN, FONMIN FRYDENLUND REPORTED ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO SPAIN.
FRYDENLUND SAID LEADERS OF GOS INDICATED TO HIM THAT THE GOVT
WAS READY TO TAKE UP THE QUESTION OF SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN
NATO, AND MIGHT BE READY TO MAKE A PROPOSAL TO THE CORTES
AS SOON AS THE QUESTION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION WAS DISPOSED
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OF, WHICH COULD BE AS EARLY AS LATE 1978 OR EARLY 1979.
SECDEF BROWN EXPRESSED HIS SURPRISE THAT SPAIN WOULD BE READY TO
MOVE SO SOON,
AND NOTED THAT WHILE THE US WOULD SUPPORT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT,
WE WOULD WAIT UNTIL THE SPANIARDS TAKE THE INITIATIVE
BEFORE SPEAKING OUT ON THE SUBJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS APRIL 13 CONVERSATION WITH SECDEF BROWN, FONMIN FRYDENLUND REPORTED THAT GOS LEADERS, INCLUDING PM SURAEZ AND FONMIN OREJA, HAD TOLD HIM THAT SPAIN COULD BE READY AS EARLY AS SIX MONTHS FROM NOW TO BEGIN CONSIDERING THE QUESTION OF SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. GOVERNMENT LEADERS SAID THEY WERE CONFIDENT OF A SUFFICIENT DEGREE OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR SPAIN IN NATO TO MAKE A FORMAL PROPOSAL TO THE CORTES SOON AFTER THE APPROVAL OF A NEW CONSTITUTION. THIS COULD BE AS SOON AS NOV 1978 OR JAN 1979, BUT FRYDENLUND COMMENTED TO SECDEF THAT HE THOUGHT THE PROCESS WOULD TAKE LONGER, AND HE PERSONALLY WONDERED IF THE SPANISH LEADERSHIP HAD TAKEN ADEQUATELY INTO ACCOUNT THE POSSIBLE INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO SPANISH MEMBERSHIP WHICH MIGHT BE GENERATED BY MOVING SO QUICKLY.

3. IN SPEAKING OF THE PSOE VIEW, THE FONMIN REPORTED THAT PARTY OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT 1980-81, WHEN THE US-SPANISH DEFENSE AGREEMENT EXPIRED, WOULD BE THE MORE APPROPRIATE TIME TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF SPAIN IN NATO.

4. FRYDENLUND, TURNING TO THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN EUROPEAN ATTITUDES, NOTED THAT THE STRONGEST OPPONENTS OF THE FORMER SPANISH DICTATORSHIP, NORWAY, DENMARK, BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS WHO WERE ALSO THE MOST SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR RAPID DEMOCRATICATION IN SPAIN--HAD UNDERGONE A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THEIR ATTITUDES. THE
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FONMIN OFFERED THAT IN VIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN HE DOUBTED THAT THERE WOULD BE MUCH OPPOSITION TO SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO IN THOSE COUNTRIES OR IN THE REST OF THE WESTERN EUROPE. FRYDENLUND SAID HE ASKED PM SUAREZ WHAT THE PROPER POSTURE OF WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE ON THE QUESTION, TO WHICH SUAREZ IS REPORTED TO HAVE REPLIED THAT WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS SHOULD AVOID COMMENT UNTIL A SPANISH DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED, BUT THAT ONCE THE SPANIARDS HAD DECIDED TO JOIN NATO, WE SUPPORT FOR SPAIN WOULD BE IN ORDER.

5. SECDEF BROWN RAISED THE QUESTION OF DIFFICULTIES THAT MIGHT BE PRESENTED IN TERMS OF THE "AUGMENTATION OF BLOCS" RAISED BY THE USSR AT BOTH HELSINKI AND BELGRADE, WHICH THE SECRETARY FELT HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN MORE DIRECTED AGAINST NATO ANYWAY THAN AGAINST THE WARSAW PACT. FRYDENLUND REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT SURE THAT THE SPANIARDS HAD CONSIDERED THE QUESTION FROM THIS ANGLE, BUT HE HAD RAISED THE PROBLEM OF PRESSURES FROM THE SOVIET UNION IN MADRID, AND THE SPANIARDS ADMITTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME PRESSURE APPLIED ALREADY BY THE RUSSIANS. GOS FEELS ANY PRESSURE BY THE USSR WILL BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE IN TERMS OF PREVENTING SPANISH ACCESSION TO

THE NATO TREATY.

6. SECDEF BROWN SUMMED UP THE US POSITION BY NOTING THAT SPANISH PARTICIPATION IN NATO WOULD HELP STABILIZE THE SOUTHERN FLANK, BUT THAT WE SHOULD LET THE SPANIARDS DECIDE THE QUESTION THEMSELVES.

7. COMMENT: FONMIN FRYDENLUND'S REPORT OF HIS DISCUSSIONS ON NATO WITH SPANISH OFFICIALS INDICATES AT LEAST A NEW RECEPTIVITY ON THE PART OF THE NORWEGIANS ON THE QUESTION, IF NOT PERHAPS A BIT OF HIGH OPTIMISM. HOWEVER, ACCURATE HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE SPANISH POSITION AT THIS TIME IS, THE FONMIN'S ENTHUSIASM FOR BRINGING SPAIN INTO NATO SIGNALS A CONTINUING FAVORABLE TREND IN NORWEGIAN ATTITUDES ON THE QUESTION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEMBERSHIP, ALLIANCE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978OSLO01844
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780162-0538
Format: TEL
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780455/aaaabugk.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8b9b01b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2962693
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECDEF VISIT: NORWEGIAN VIEWS ON SPAIN IN NATO
TAGS: OVIP, MPOL, NO, SP, US, NATO, (BROWN, HAROLD), (FRYDENLUND, KNUT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbs://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8b9b01b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014